

AN ESSAY ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE NEW BIRTH

JOHN FLETCHER

[This essay begins on page 52 and there is nothing attached to the preceding manuscript.—ed.]

SECTION V

The doctrine of the new birth, as it is stated in these sheets, is directly or indirectly maintained by the most spiritual divines, especially in their sacred poems

A great preacher begins his Sermon on the circumcision of the heart by the following observation: 'Tis the melancholy remark of an excellent man, that "he who now preaches the most excellent duties of Christianity, runs the hazard of being esteemed by a great part of his hearers, a setter forth of new doctrines." Most men have so lived away the substance of that religion, the profession whereof they still retain, that no sooner are any of those truths proposed, which difference the Spirit of Christ from the spirit of the world, than they cry out, Thou bringest strange things to our ears.'

What Mr. Wesley says of preaching is equally true of writing. It is therefore probable, that some readers in pursuing these sheets, will cry out, This is a new doctrine! To break the force of this rising prejudice, I beg leave to observe, that what we have overlooked, let it be ever so common, or ever so old, frequently appears new to us, when we begin to give it a proper attention.

What is new in my explanation of the text, where our Lord declares, that we must be born again of water and of the Spirit? When I assert, that being born again has a direct reference to being baptized, do I advance any thing new? Did not the above-quoted writer say many years ago? The expression being born again, was not first used by our Lord. It was in common use among the Jews, when our Saviour appeared among them. When an adult heathen was convinced, that the Jewish religion was of God, and desired to join therein, it was the custom to baptize him first,

John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley and Wesley's "vindicator," died before he had the opportunity to finish this work, but it circulated privately among some of his friends.

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before he was admitted to circumcision. And when he was baptized, he was said to be born again. See the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Works, Vol. iii. p.296. Now if the expression being born again had originally such a reference to baptism, does it not follow, that to be born again of water and of the Spirit, may well mean being baptized with water and with the Holy Ghost, or being renewed to repentance and love according to the two gospel-dispensations, which are sealed by a baptism of water, and a baptism of fire?

Should it be objected, that this is a new interpretation; I appeal to the commentators whom I first meet with. The one is Bengelius. This judicious Divine, in his notes on John III.3,5 (where our Lord preaches the new birth to Nicodemus) says, "the sense is, O Nicodemus, the good opinion of Christ is not sufficient: Thou must explicitly believe, and submit to the divine institution of baptism." Bengelius supports this sentiment by a reference to Mark XVI.16, where Christ says, He that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved. This learned critic adds, "Our Lord defines the new birth to be communion with himself, and with the Holy Ghost; for nobody can enjoy God without his Son and his Spirit. As for the water" (which our Lord mentions, where he speaks of being born again of water) "it denotes the baptism unto Christ administered by John [the] Baptist; a baptism thus, which the Pharisees of whom Nicodemus was one, had rejected; altho' the Jews were accustomed to baptisms, as appears from Heb. IX.10. And it seems that Nicodemus himself had but low thoughts of John's baptism since he made no mention of him in John iii.2. Nor is it enough to have communion with Christ" (by being baptized in his name;) "communion with his Spirit is also necessary, as appears from Acts ii.38." And Peter said, &c. Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. From these quotations it is evident, that Bengelius saw that to be born again of water and of the Spirit, is to be interested in Christ and in the Holy Ghost by sharing the blessings, which are sealed to believers both by the preparatory baptism of water, and by the perfective baptism of the Spirit.

Mr. Henry is not far from Bengelius's sentiment: for in his comment on our Lord's words, Except a man be born again of water, he says; "It is probable that Christ had an eye for the ordinance of baptism, which John had used, and he himself had begun to use."

Nor would I have the reader imagine, that Bengelius and Henry were singular in this sentiment; for the bulk of the Lutherans understand the expression to be born again of water, just as Bengelius does. In Pool's annotations on John iii.5, we find these words: "There is a great difference among interpreters about being born of water: The Romanists and rigid Lutherans understand the water in a proper sense, for the element of Baptism." It is true that Mr. Pool blames them for holding this opinion, because it seems to make water baptism absolutely necessary to salvation. But if this inconvenience attends the doctrine of the Lutherans and the Romanists, it has nothing to do with the doctrine maintained in this essay: For I do not confine the being born again of water, to the ordinance of dipping or sprinkling; but extend it to the whole preparatory dispensation, which is ordinarily sealed to penitents by an effusion of water. I say ordinarily, not universally, because some (like the penitent thief on the cross) may be born again according to the dispensation of the Father and the Son, without having received either the baptism of John or the water-baptism of Christ, as a seal of their new birth: just as a king may have regal authority, and a true title to the crown; tho' some accident should have prevented his formal coronation. And as we could say, that such a king inherits the crown without the regal ceremony of a coronation;

so we can say of some disciples of Christ, [the penitent thief, for example, and pious Quakers] that they are born again according to the dispensation, which is sealed by an effusion of water; altho' peculiar circumstances, or prejudices, may have hindered them from going thro' the Christian ceremony of water-baptism.

If the sense, which I have fixed upon the phrase Being born again of water, is as old as the Lutheran, Roman, and Jewish churches; can any thing be more absurd than to reject that sense, upon pretense of its being new?

With respect to what I have said of the being born again of the Spirit, or baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whoever will consult the poems composed by spiritual men, from the ancient hymn called *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, to the well-known modern hymn,

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down, &c—

Whoever, I say, will consult those hymns, will see, that what I have said on the plentiful outpouring of the Spirit, is by no means a novel doctrine. Had not Dr. Watts, for instance, the baptism of the Spirit &c of fire in view, when he sung?

Come, Holy Spirit
Come, Holy Spirit, heav'nly dove,
With all they quick'ning pow'rs,
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours.—

[Again:] Descend, Celestial fire,
And seize me from above:
Wrap me in flames of pure desire,
A sacrifice to love.

Had not the pious &c learned Dr. Henry Moore the same baptism in view, when he wrote,

Father, if justly still we claim
To us and ours the Promise made;
To us by graciously the same,
And crown with living fire our head:
Our claim admit, and from above
Of holiness the Spirit show'r, &c.

And do Messrs J. and C. Wesley, with those ministers and congregations, who adopt their hymns, deal in spiritual novelties, when they sing the following lines?

Come, Holy Ghost, my heart inspire,
Attest that I am born again
Come and baptize me now with fire, &c.

Again: Come, Holy Ghost, all quickning fire,
Come, and in me delight to rest:
 Drawn by the lure of strong desire
 O come, and consecrate my breast:
 The temple of my soul prepare,
 And fix thy sacred presence there,—
 Let all my pow'rs thine entrance feel,
 And deeper stamp thyself the seal.

Again: Jesu, thine all-victorious love
Shed in my heart abroad:
 Then shall my feet no longer rove,
 Rooted and fix'd in God.

O that in me the sacred fire
 Might now begin to glow:
Burn up the dross of base desire
 and make the mountains flow!

O that it now from heav'n might fall,
 And all my sins consume!
Come, Holy Ghost, for thee I call,
Spirit of burning, come!
Refining fire, go thro' my heart,
Illuminate my soul!
Scatter thy life thro' every part,
And sanctify the whole.

The preceding testimonies might suffice: Nevertheless I beg leave to produce a few more such, in hopes that the heart of the pious reader will catch the baptismal flame, whilst his mind is convinc'd that I do not advance a new doctrine. The following hymns are well known to many of those who plead the gospel Promise of sanctification.

Chose from the world if now I stand,
 Adorn'd in righteousness divine;
 If brought into the promis'd land,
 I justly call the Saviour mine:

Thy sanctifying Spirit pour,
 To quench my thirst, and was me clean:
 Now, Father, let the gracious show'r
Descend, and make me pure from sin, &c.

Holy, and true, and righteous, Lord,

I wait to prove thy perfect will:
Be mindful of thy gracious word,
And stamp me with thy Spirit's seal.

Again: An inward baptism of fire
Where with to be baptiz'd I have:
Tis all my longing soul's desire,
This, only this my soul can save.¹
Straiten'd I am till this be done;
Kindle in me the sacred flame;
Father, in me reveal thy Son,
Baptize me into Jesu's name.

Transform my nature into thine,
Let all my pow'rs thine impress feel,
Let all my soul become divine,
And stamps me with thy Spirit's seal, &c.

If with the wretched sons of men,
It still be they delight to live,
Come, Lord, heget my soul again,
Thyself, thy quick'ning Spirit give.

With me he dwells, and bids thee come,
Answer thine own effectual prayer:
Enter my heart, and fix thine home,
Thine everlasting presence there.

Nor did the pious Mr. Whitefield differ from Messrs Wesley with respect to this doctrine; for in his collection of hymns, he sings together with them:

One the Spirit, which we [believers] claim,
One the pure baptismal flame.
When he baptized adults, he claimed this baptismal flame in the following words:
Descend, celestial dove!

In ev'ry bosom dwell, &c
Anoint with holy fire,
Baptize with purging flames
This soul, and with thy grace inspire
In ceaseless, living streams.

Do I wrong the pious Countess Huntingdon, and her Chaplains, if I think that they have some thing of the baptism which I vindicate in view, when they sing?

Come, descend, O heavenly Spirit

Fan each spark into a flame
Blessings let us now inherit,
 Blessings, which we cannot name, &c.
 Descend from heav'n, celestial Dove,
 With flames of pure, seraphic love
 Our ravish'd breasts inspire.
 Fountain of joy, blest Paraclete,
Warm our cold hearts with heav'nly heat,
 And set our souls on fire.

And does not the Rev. McMadan look for some thing like the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost, when he signs in the versified Te Deum, and in his hymn for Whit-sunday?

Thy witnessing Spirit
 In us shed abroad,
 And bid us inherit
 The kingdom of God.

Thy sorrowful disciples cheer,
 And send us down the Comforter.—
 Hasten Him, Lord, into each heart,
 Our sure inseparable guide:
 O might we meet and never part!
 O might He in our hearts abide!
 And keep his house of praise and pray'r,
 And rest, and reign for ever there!

Innumerable are the testimonies to the full dispensation of the Spirit, which are found in the works of our sacred poets, and in the collections of hymns published by our gospel-ministers. But these will suffice to prove, that if pious divines do not all explicitly maintain the doctrine of this essay, they all pray, at times for the fullness of the gospel-blessing, which imperfect believers are here directed to press after.

SECTION VI

Should it be urged, that it is wrong to establish a doctrine upon devotional pieces of poetry; because pious writers may say many things as poets which they would disapprove as divines: I reply, that pious writers would not more propagate false doctrines or a new gospel in verse than in prose. But supposing the readers will not pay any attention to the poetic testimony of our modern divines, I beg he would consider the doctrine of Macarius, one of the most holy of the Fathers, who in his tenth Homily, bears his full testimony to the dispensation of the Spirit.

They who have found the heavenly measure of the Spirit, the Lord shining in their hearts, fulfil that entire extent of goodness there is in the commandments of the Lord, from that treasure that is within them, Christ.—For, by means of the heavenly treasure, do they work every virtue in the whole circle of righteousness.—Whoever therefore professes with-

in himself this heavenly treasure of the Spirit, he fulfils in this Spirit all the righteousness of the commandments, and the complete practice of the virtues, without blame, and in purity; moreover without compulsion or difficulty. Then let us beseech God, and seek diligently unto him, that he would freely grant us the treasure of his Spirit, that we may be enabled to walk in all his commandments without reproof, and without blemish, and fulfil all righteousness of the Spirit in purity and perfection.”—

‘It behooved every one to oblige himself by force, to petition the Lord, that he may receive the heavenly treasure of the Spirit, so as without difficulty to be able to perform all the commandments of the Lord, blameless and in purity; which before, even with violence, he could never do. For being poor, and destitute of the communication of the Spirit, how should it come by such spiritual professions? But the soul, which, by faith and much patience, hath found the Lord, the true treasure, produceth the fruits of the Spirit and performs all the commandments with purity and free from blame.’

‘We ought therefore to beg of God with earnestness of heart, that he would grant unto us his riches, the true treasure of Christ in our hearts, in the power and efficacy of the Spirit. And thus having found first within ourselves salvation [so great salvation] ‘we shall then profit others also; producing from that treasure of Christ within us, all the goodness of spiritual discourses; and declaring heavenly mysteries. For so it pleased the good will of the Father, that he should dwell with every one that believeth.’ ~~(the promise of the Father, and hath patience to wait till he inherits it. ‘He that loveth me, says Christ, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. And again, We will come unto him, I and my Father, and make our abode with him. Thus did the infinite kindness of the Father will. Thus was the inconceivable love of Christ pleased. Glory be to the tender mercies of the Holy Trinity, which surpass all expression!’~~

Holy Macarius, after ‘illustrating in some measure by examples, the methods of the Spirit in the soul’ that is born of the Spirit, goes on thus: ‘These several refreshments of grace are expressed indeed very differently. However, there is no intermission of their influence; but one operation continually succeeds another. For when the soul is thoroughly cleansed from all its corrupt affections; and is united, by an ineffable communion, to the Spirit; and is become Spirit itself: then it is all light, all eye, all spirit, all joy, all rest, and gladness, all love, all bowels, all goodness and clemency. As a stone in the bottom of the sea, is every way surrounded with water: so are those’ ~~‘who are baptized with the Holy Ghost’~~ ‘every way drenched with the Holy Spirit; and made like Christ himself; possessing unalterably within themselves the virtues of the power of the Spirit, being blameless within and without—spotless and pure. For being brought to perfection by the Spirit, how is it possible’ ~~‘so long as they keep themselves, and do not grieve the Spirit’ they should outwardly produce the fruits of sin? But at all times, and in every instance, do the fruits of the Spirit shine brightly out in their whole deportment.~~

‘Let us therefore beseech God, and believe in love and abundant hope, that the same Spirit may lead us into all the will of God, and refresh us with all the variety of the rest he gives, that by means of each an administration we may come to the perfection of the fullness of Christ, as the apostle expresses it, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. The Lord hath promised to all that believe in him, and ask in truth, that he will give to them the mysteries of the ineffable communion of the Spirit, and therefore let us make haste attain the good things we have before mentioned.’

And that, according to Macarius's doctrine, we attain all those good things, when we receive what ~~Macarius~~ he calls the treasure of the Spirit, and what our Lord calls the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, is evident from what he says in his fifteenth Homily. 'The great men, and the righteous, and the kings' (celebrated in the Old Testament) 'knew that the Redeemer was to come: but that his blood was to be poured out upon the cross, they neither knew nor had heard; neither had it entered into their hearts that there was to be the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, &c that Christians were to receive the Comforter, and be clothed with power from on high, and be filled with the Godhead, and mixed together with the Holy Spirit.' Christian Library, Vol. I. p. 133.

From the preceding extract I conclude, that, if Macarius, who lived near 1300 years ago, so clear by ~~he~~ preached the baptism and dispensation of the Holy Spirit; ~~Mr. John Wesley~~ ~~and~~* I cannot reasonably be charged with novelty for doing the same thing.—For I only tread in the doctrinal steps of that holy Father, as he himself trod in the doctrinal steps of Jesus Christ and John the Baptist.

Should the testimony which holy Macarius bore to the full dispensation of the Spirit be disregarded, because he ~~was not a prelate~~ was not of the first rank in the Church, I beg leave to give him a colleague, who, for dignity and learning, was a second to none: I mean St. Chrysostom, who may be considered as the Angel of the Church of Constantinople. In his comment on John XIV.26, he speaks, thus of the Power from on high, which Christ promised to his disciples: 'Such is that grace, that if it finds sadness, it takes it away: if evil desire, it consumes it. It casts out fear, and suffers him that receives it to be a man no longer; but translates him, as it were, into heaven. Hence none of them' (that received the Holy Ghost on, or after, the day of Pentecost) 'counted any thing his own, but continued in prayer, with gladness and singleness of heart. For this chiefly is their need of the Holy Ghost. For the fruit of the Spirit is joy, peace, &c. Indeed spiritual men often grieve: but that grief is sweeter than joy: for whatever is of the Spirit is the greatest gain, as whatever is of the world is the greatest loss. Let us therefore in keeping the commandments' (according to our Lord's exhortation ver. 15) 'secure the unconquerable assistance of the Spirit, and so we shall be nothing inferior to angels.' (in purity and holiness, love). From these words it is evident, St. Chrysostom taught: (1) That the promised Comforter is fully given to all the imperfect believers, who in keeping the commandments secure his unconquerable assistance; And (2) That when they have thus received the Holy Ghost, they are "more than men," and "nothing inferior to angels" in purity of intention, and cheerfulness of obedience.

I find in a modern author³ another quotation from St. Chrysostom, which will throw some light upon the two births and dispensation of grace which I attempt to place in their scriptural order. 'Whereas the title of the Sons of God had been given of Old to the Jews—he (St. Chrysostom) shows how great a difference there is between that honour and this' [between the honour of being a son of God according to the Jewish dispensation, and that of being a son of God according to the full dispensation of the Spirit of Christ] 'For tho', says he, the titles are the same, yet the things are not. And he plainly proves it:—And first he shows what they (the Jews) had received, viz, A Spirit of bondage—unto fear, &c. For

* It was Fletcher's custom to write "Mr. Wesley and I" and then strike through Wesley's name, modestly allowing Wesley to restore it before his manuscript would be sent to the publisher.—ed.

punishments were at their heels and much fear was on every side.—But with us [Christians, who have received the Spirit of adoption, according to the fulness of the blessing of the gospel] 'it is not so. For our mind and conscience are cleansed; so that we do all things well, not for fear of punishment, but thro' our love to God, and an habit of virtue.' From these words I infer, that if St. Chrysostom grants, that the Jews, who had the spirit of bondage, were sons of God, or were born of God according to their dispensation; much more does he grant it of the disciples of Christ before the day of Pentecost, who rose higher than the Jews in Christian experiences. Nor will this doctrine appear singular, if we advert to these words of Origen, produced by the same modern author. 'He Wesley in the preceding page quotes with approbation these decisive words of Origen is a babe' [in Christ] 'who is fed with milk—but if he seeks the things that are above, without doubt he will be of the number of those, who receive not the Spirit of bondage unto fear, but the Spirit of Adoption.—the sum of all good things consists in this, that a man i.e. a babe in Christ be found worthy to receive the grace of the Holy Ghost, otherwise nothing will be accounted perfect in him.' See Farther Appeal, &c page 57.

The testimony, which Macarius, St. Chrysostom, and Origen, formerly bore to the dispensation of the Spirit, is glorious, but, in my judgement, that which Dr. Gell bore to it in the last century far exceeds it in glory; because he not only stood up with boldness for that too much neglected dispensation, but also wisely contradistinguished it from the dispensations of the Father and of the Son; Three distinct dispensations, which we are apt to confound, ~~so long as we lean to much towards Calvinism~~, and which Dr. Gell it is to be wished all gospel-ministers would learn to place in their evangelical order, ~~To what I have said on this head in my Essay on truth, I beg leave to add after the example of Dr. Gell. This judicious Divine, in his Essay as the Dr. does in the following lines, which I transcribe from his Essay towards the amendment of the last translation of the Bible, page 789.~~

'I doubt not but they all, or the most of them' [that plead for the continuance of sin from 1 John 1:8] 'fought the fight of faith: But I doubt whether many of them had laid hold upon the eternal life, so far as to have attained unto the dispensation of the Spirit—That we may the better understand this, we must know, that sin against God may be considered according to the three dispensations of the Father, Son, and Spirit—When God the Father, by his law raised up in the fallen man, and testifying against him connects, informs, and instructs him to amendment of life; and man meantime neglects, and opposes this attraction and drawing of the Father, and knows not, or duly considers not that this goodness of God leads him to repentance, This is the sin against the Father, which, upon repentance at the teaching of John' (the Baptist) 'is forgiven unto men.'

'But when now we are, by the discipline of the Father, brought unto the Son, and look on him whom we have pierced, &c and he now begins to assure us with the same mind, we are yet in great ignorance and weakness, as 1 Cor. 2,3, and when he draws us, we draw back: when he would, we will not. The contention is long between the house of David and the house of Saul. In many things we offend all. Nor can we say, that we have no sin, until the Spirit be poured from on high, until we be born from the dead, until death be swallowed up in victory; until we have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.'

'Little notice has been taken [and in these days much less] of the three dispensations, and states of men in the Father, Son, and Spirit; that there is a sign against the Father, and

against the Son; those children of the Father, who have their sins forgiven them thro' his name, and are now brought unto the Son, and grow so strong in him, that they overcome the evil one; these at length attain to the old age in the Spirit, and experimentally know him' (in trinity) 'who is from the beginning. This is that state which is without sin. Such a state is possible and attainable, thro' the grace of God and his Holy Spirit.—They therefore are much to blame, who abuse this scripture, which St. John applies to little children in Christ, 1 John 2. 1, and extend it to all Christians, in all their spiritual ages.'

Page 797, this judicious Writer, speaking of the very same birth of the Spirit, which I contend for in these pages, says with great truth: 'There is no divine birth so much opposed as this, and that by all sorts of Christians, learned and unlearned: And the reason is: The evil one knows that if such a state be believed possible, wherein all sin being subdued, men may perform exact obedience to God, such as that state is wherunto St. John, and his fellow-apostles had attained,—well he knows, that his kingdom would be towards an end:—'

If the fourth century produced a Macarius and a Chrysostom, and the last age a Cell, we have reason to bless God, that our days have produced two^d divines (par nobile fratrum) who earnestly contend for the birth or baptism of the Spirit, and for the perfection of Christianity. That they hold the doctrine of the dispensations, I have already shewn in my Essay on Truth. All I want to prove now is that in prose as well as in verse, they have again and again directly or indirectly contended for the doctrine maintained in the preceding pages. Take a few, out of the many proofs, with which this assertion might be supported; remembering that, many as these proofs are, there would be many more, if we had not all "leaned too much towards Calvinism"—a system of doctrine which does not make a proper distinction between the dispensations of divine grace.

Mr. J. Wesley how print In the preface to the third part of their Hymns and Sacred Poems, after describing the complete Christian, the believer who is fully born of God—born of the Spirit, as well as of the Father and the Son, they add: 'not that every one is a child of the devil, (as some have rashly asserted) till he is in this full sense, born of God. On the contrary, whosoever he be, who has a sure trust in God, that thro' the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to God; he is a child of God' [that is, he is a child of God according to the dispensation of the Father and of the Son]. 'For tho' the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, yet is he Lord of all. God does not despise the day of small things; the day of fears, and doubts, and clouds and darkness; But if there be first a willing mind, pressing towards the mark of the prize of our high calling, it is accepted (for the present) according to what man hath, and not according to what he hath not.' From this concurrent testimony of the two above-mentioned brothers, it is evident, that they make a capital difference between the believers, who are born of God in the lower sense of the word, and the believer, who, as they express it, are 'in this full sense born of God,' that is, born or translate into the full dispensation of the Holy Ghost—the dispensation of perfect Christianity.

Even in his first sermon, entitled Salvation by faith, Mr. J. Wesley clearly distinguished between 'the faith, which the apostles themselves had while Christ was yet upon earth; tho' they so believed on him as to leave all to follow him, and were sent by their Master to preach the kingdom of God.' And what is this, but distinguishing between the faith of ante-Pentecostal, imperfect Christianity; and the faith of Pentecostal, perfect Christianity?

This important distinction between faith in Christ and the full dispensation, baptism, or seal of the Spirit, appears in many other writings of the same author. The apostle says to the Ephesians, After that ye believed in him [Christ] ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Eph. 1.13. Mr. Wesley in his note on that verse, observes (1) That the Ephesians were there sealed "probably some time after their first believing;" (2) That this sealing Spirit is "promised to all the children of God;" whence it follows, that people may be believers, and children of God in the inferior sense of these words, before they are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and have received the Promise of the Father: And (3) That "this sealing seems to imply a full impression of the image of God on their souls; and a full assurance of receiving all the promises, whether relating to time or eternity." Accordingly Mr. Wesley does not scruple to intimate in his Note on Act viii.15, that the believers of Samaria, who had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, had not yet received the Holy Ghost, either "in his miraculous gifts or his full sanctifying graces:"—those full and ripe perfect graces, which distinguish the perfect believers the believers, who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost, from those who have not. For in the language of the Scriptures the giving—the pouring out—the shedding forth—and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, are phrases of the same import. And to receive the Holy Ghost,—to be sealed with the Spirit of promise—to be baptized with the Holy Ghost—and to have the Holy Ghost falling upon one—and to be endured with [Pentecostal] power from on high, are expressions, which convey the same meaning.

Proceeding upon the same scriptural plan, Mr. Wesley's sermon on John iii.8, So is every one that is born of the Spirit, gives us the following admirable description of the spiritual man. 'When a man is born of God, born of the Spirit, how is the manner of his existence changed? His whole soul is now sensible of God, and he can say by sure experience,—I feel thee in all my ways.—The Spirit or breath of God is immediately inspired, breathed into the new-born soul. And the same breath which comes from, returns to God: as it is continually received by faith, so it is continually rendered back by love, by prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving: love and praise and prayer being the breath of every soul, which is truly completely born of God' (the Spirit) 'by this new kind of spiritual respiration, spiritual life is not only sustained, but increased day by day; together with spiritual strength and motion and sensation.—All the darkness is now passed away, and he abides in the light of God's countenance. All his spiritual senses being now awakened, he has a clear intercourse with the invisible world.—He now knows what is joy in the Holy Ghost, what the love of God, which is shed abroad in the hearts of them, that believer in him thro' Christ Jesus. Thus, &c. he who is born of the Spirit, which is experienced by those who are born of the Spirit, and confound it with the joy that belongs to the inferior dispensations of divine grace; Mr. Wesley describes it in the following lines of the same sermon: 'It is not for the tongue of man to describe joy in the Holy Ghost. It is the hidden manna, which no man knoweth, save he that receiveth it. It not only remains, but overflows in the depth of affliction.—When sufferings most abound, the consolations of the Spirit do much more abound; in so much that the sons of God,' [he speaks of those who are born of the Spirit] as well as of water laugh at destruction when it cometh; at want, pain, hell, and the grave.'

'Such' lads our author! 'if the appeal be made to the oracles of God, is everyone that is born of the Spirit. This it is, in the judgment of the Spirit of God, to be a son of God' (according to the dispensation of the Spirit.) 'It is so to believe in God thro' Christ, as not to

commit sin, and to enjoy at all times and in all places, that peace of God which passeth all understanding. It is so to hope in God thro' the Son of his love, as to have not only the testimony of a good conscience, but also the Spirit of God bearing witness with your spirits, that ye are the children of God.—It is so to love God, as you never did love any creature: so that you are constrained to love all men as yourselves, with a love not only ever burning in your hearts, but flaming out in all your actions and conversations, and making your whole life one labour of love, one continued obedience to those commands, Be ye merciful, as God is merciful; Be ye perfect as your Father, which is in heaven is perfect. Now Mr. Wesley is too judicious to assert that no person is a believer, who does not answer this excellent description of one who is born of the Spirit; for it suits none but complete Christians; and very few of those, whom he justly calls believers in Christ, come up to this standard of Christian perfection. And that I have not wronged him by adding the clause (according to the dispensation of the Spirit) appears, not only from the text and context, but from the awful question, which immediately follows the quotation. 'Who then are ye' [says he] 'that are thus born of God'?—Every one of you, who have observed these words, cannot but feel and know of a truth, whether as this hour you are thus a child of God or no.—I ask not whether you were born of water and of the Spirit. But are you now the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in you? The two emphatical expressions thus born of God,—thus a child of God, indicate to Mr. Wesley's candid readers, that he allows of a birth, and a sonship, inferior to the above-described birth and sonship of the Spirit.

His sermon on Christian perfection is still stronger. For in that discourse, he explicitly rests the doctrine of full Christian regeneration, on the full or Pentecostal dispensation of the Spirit. Take his own words: 'It is of great importance to observe, and that more fully than it has been done, the wide difference there is between the Jewish and the Christian dispensation, and the ground of it, which the same apostle assigns John vii.38, &c. After had there related those words of our blessed Lord, He that believeth on me, as the scripture that said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters, he immediately subjoins, This spake he of the Spirit, which they who' believe on him, were afterwards to receive. For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Now the Apostle cannot mean here, as some have thought, that the miracle-working power of the Holy Ghost was not yet given. For this was given: our Lord had given it to all his apostles, when he first sent them forth to preach the gospel. He then gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out; power to heal the sick, yea to raise the dead. But the Holy Ghost was not yet given in his sanctifying graces, as he was after Jesus was glorified. It was then, when he ascended up on high and led captivity captive, that he received those gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, then first it was, that they the imperfect believers, who were not yet baptized with the Holy Ghost and who waited for the Promise of the Father, were made more than conquerors over sin, by the Holy Ghost given unto them.'

From these words it is evident, that Mr. Wesley rests the perfection of Christianity on the Pentecostal dispensation of the Spirit, and teaches, that, to be "made more than conquerors over sin," imperfect believers need only "wait for the promise of the Father," till "the Holy Ghost is given unto them" according to the fulness of that grand promise. That this is Mr. Wesley's sentiment appears, if possible, more clear by still, from what he immedi-

ately adds.

That this great salvation from sin was not given till Jesus was glorified, St. Peter also plainly testified; where speaking of his brethren in the flesh, as now receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, he adds, 1 Pet. 1.9, &c. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and search diligently, who prophesied of the grace, i.e. the gracious dispensation, that should come unto you.—Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; viz. at the day of Pentecost, and so unto all generations into the hearts of true^d believers—for rather, of believers, who do not stop short of the Promise of the Father, and the full power of Christian godliness. On this ground, even the [Pentecostal 'grace' for to that grace Mr. W. chiefly refers in the context] 'which was brought unto them by the' internal as well as external 'revelation of Jesus Christ, the apostle might well build that strong exhortation,—As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Those who have duly considered these things must allow, that the privileges of Christians, are in no wise to be measured by what the Old Testament records concerning those, who were under the Jewish dispensation^d nor by what the New Testament records concerning those, who are under the preparatory dispensation of the gospel, which is sealed by water-baptism^d 'seeing the fulness of time is now come; the Holy Ghost is now given: the great salvation of God is brought unto men by the' [spiritual as well as external] revelation of Jesus Christ. The kingdom of heaven is now set up on earth: concerning which the Spirit of God declared of old, so far is David from being the pattern or standard of Christian perfection, He that is feeble among them at that day, shall be as David: and the house of David shall be as God's the angel of the Lord before them, Zech. xii.8.

No unprejudiced person can (I think) read this excellent quotation without seeing, that the Holy Ghost given in his sanctifying graces, according to the full measure held forth in the promise of the Father—The kingdom of Heaven come with the full, Pentecostal, baptismal power of the Spirit—the great salvation of God, the great salvation from sin, and Christian perfection, are expressions, which Mr. Wesley uses promiscuously. Hence it follows, that, so sure as this great Vindication of Christian perfection allows, that there are imperfect, as well as perfect Christians, he allows also, that there are believers, who [tho' born of God according to the preparatory gospel-dispensation, which is sealed by water-baptism^d] are not yet born of God according to the perfective gospel dispensation, which was opened on the day of Pentecost.

Should it be objected, that I make Mr. Wesley lay a greater stress upon the dispensation of the Spirit, than he really means to do; I appeal to his Sermon xxx, where he says: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, who is pure, unmixt, essential goodness, give good things to them that ask him. Or as our Lord expresses it on another occasion, give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him. In him are enclosed all good things; all wisdom, peace, joy, love: the whole treasures of holiness and happiness: all that God hath prepared for them that love him." Now if Christian perfection takes in more than the whole treasures of holiness and happiness, and all that God hath prepared for them that love him, I confess that I misrepresent my friend, by asserting, that he chiefly rests the doctrine of Christian perfection on the being baptized and filled with the Spirit.

Should my Calvinist brethren disregard Mr. W.'s testimony, concerning the glory of spiritual Christianity; they will pay some attention to that of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield. He also nobly contended for the dispensation of the Spirit; tho', thro' mistake, he opposed the doctrine of Christian perfection; supposing, that Mr. W. rested it on a pharisaic foundation, and not on the virtue of Christ's blood and Spirit. The grand controversy God has with England! [says he in his Sermon on Is.XL.19,] 'is for the slight put upon the Holy Ghost. As soon as a person begins to talk of the work of the Holy Ghost, they cry, You are a Methodist: As soon as you speak about the divine influences of the Holy Ghost, O! say they, you are an enthusiast.' Nor is it surprising, that Mr. Whitefield should have spoken so warmly on this subject for he well knew, that the promise of the Holy Ghost in its Pentecostal power, is the great promise of the Christian church. Accordingly he begins his letter to Dr. Durrell in these words: 'You being a Master in Israel, need not be informed, that the mission of the Holy Ghost is the one grand promise of the new; as the coming of Jesus Christ was the great promise of the Old Testament dispensation. I will pray the Father, says our blessed Lord to his almost disconsolate disciples, and he shall give you another Comforter. And again, It is expedient for you, that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come, but if I depart (if being the purchase of his all-atoning blood, and designed to be the immediate fruit and proof of the reality of his resurrection and ascension to heaven) I will send him unto you. And that they might know that this Comforter was not to be confined to, or monopolized by them, but was to be of standing general use, he immediately gives them intimations of the design &c nature of his office; and therefore adds, and when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, &c. A strange and till then unheard of promise this!—A promise, which none but one who was God over all, could dare to make; a promise which none but one, who was God over all, could possibly fulfill. Agreeable to this promise, &c, the divine Paraclete, the Holy Ghost on the day of pentecost came down from heaven like a rushing mighty wind, &c. and the same day were added to this infant Church 3000 souls, &c. by the influence of this Almighty Agent, he [our Lord] has promised to be with his ministers and people to the end of the world, and agreeable to this has taught us daily to pray, that his kingdom may come. The love Jesus shed abroad in the hearts by the Holy Ghost is indeed all in all. This is glory begun: This is the opening of the kingdom of heaven in the soul.'—White Works, Vol. iv. 311, and Vol. ii. page 447.

This blessed Spirit, who once moved on the face of the great deep; who overshadowed the blessed Virgin before that holy child was born of her, &c. This is the Holy Ghost, who must move on the faces of our souls: This power of the most high, must come upon us: And we must be baptized with his baptism and refining fire, before we can be stiled true! [I would say complete or truly spiritual] 'members of Christ's mystical body.'—The promise [of the coming of the Comforter] was first made to our Lord's apostles. But tho' it was primarily made to them, and was literally and remarkably fulfilled at the day of Pentecost, &c, yet as they were the representatives of the whole body of believers, we must infer, that this promise must be look'd upon as spoken to us and to our children.'—'Nothing has rendered the cross of Christ of less effect than a supposition, now current among us, that most of what is contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ, was designed only for our Lord's first and immediate followers, and consequently calculated but for one or two hundred years, &c. As this is true of the gospel in general, so it is of the operation of God's Spirit upon the

hearts of believers in particular; for we no sooner mention the necessity of our receiving the holy ghost in these last days, as well as formerly, but we are looked upon by some, as enthusiasts and madmen, and by others, represented as wilfully deceiving the people.' Whit Works, Vol. iv, pag. 311.—ii.447.—vi.89, 102, 128.

Judicious Mr. Henry does not differ from Mr. Whitefield, on the subject we now discuss. When he commends upon John the Baptist's promise, that Christ should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire, Mat. iii.11, he says 'Note (1) It is Christ's prerogative to baptize with the Holy Ghost, &c. This he does in the graces and comforts of the Spirit, given to them that ask him, Luke xi.13, John vii.38, 39, Acts xi.16. (2) Those that are baptized with the Holy Ghost, are baptized as with fire; the seven spirits of God appear as seven lamps of fire, Rev. iv.5 Is fire enlightening? So the Spirit is a spirit of illumination. Is it warming; and do not their hearts burn within them? Is it consuming; and does not the Spirit of judgment as a spirit of burning consume the dross of their corruptions? Doth fire make all it seizeth like itself, and doth it move upwards? So doth the Spirit make the soul holy like itself, and its tendency is heavenwards. Christ said, I am come to send fire, Luke xii.49.'

In this excellent quotation, Mr. Henry justly refers us to the great Promise of Christ himself in John vii.38, 39, where he offers to baptize with the Holy Ghost any man, that thirsts after the waters of living water, which flow out of the belly of perfected believers. And turning to that capital promise, I find, that our pious commentator makes the following just remarks upon it. 'Observe: It is promised to all that believe on Christ, that they shall receive the Holy Ghost.—This plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost was yet matter of promise, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified, &c. The Holy Ghost was in the Old Testament prophets and saints, and Zachary and Elizabeth were both filled with the Holy Ghost. This therefore must be understood of that eminent, plentiful and general effusion of the Spirit, which was promised Joel ii.28, and accomplished Acts ii.1. The Holy Ghost was not yet given in that visible manner, that was intended. If we compare the clear knowledge, and strong grace of the disciples themselves, after that Day of Pentecost, with their darkness and weakness before, we shall understand in what sense, the Holy Ghost was not yet given: the earnest and first fruits of the Spirit were given; but the full harvest was not yet come. That which is most properly called The Dispensation of the Spirit did not commence.—Note: That the reason why the Holy Ghost was not yet given, was because Jesus was not yet glorified.—The gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased by the blood of Christ, &c. and therefore till that price was paid [tho' many other gifts were bestowed, &c.] the Holy Ghost was not given, &c. The giving of the Holy Ghost was to be both an answer to Christ's intercession, John xiv.16, and an act of his dominion, and therefore, till he is glorified, and enters upon these, the Holy Ghost is not given.—But observe, tho' the Holy Ghost was not yet given, yet it was promised. It was now the great promise of the Father.'

Mr. Henry in this last note refers with great propriety to John xiv.16. I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter;—he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. And in his comment upon that promise, which our Lord made to his imperfect disciples, he says. This is the great New Testament promise, Act i.4, as that of the Messiah was of the Old Testament.—They had themselves been endured with the Spirit in some measure. What enabled them to have all to follow Christ, and to continue with him in his temptation? What enabled them to preach the gospel, and work miracles but the Spirit,

&c? The experiences of the saints are the explications of the promises: Paradoxes to others are axioms to them, &c. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a peculiar gift, bestowed upon the disciples of Christ in a distinguishing way. It is to them hidden manna and the white stone. Thus far Mr. Henry bears his testimony to the greatness of that promise of Christ to imperfect believers, He [the Spirit] dwelleth with you, and he shall be in you:—That deep promise, which he so justly calls a Paradox, and yet an Axiom: For, whilst it appears unintelligible jargon to carnal Christians; it is esteemed a saying worthy of all acceptance by those who wait for so great salvation; and the meaning of it is clearly understood, and powerfully experienced by such as are born again of water, when their day of Pentecost is fully come, and they are baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Altho' Mr. law differed from our evangelical divines in many things, yet he agreed with them in the capital doctrine maintained in these sheets. Witness the following passages extracted from his works. 'All the institutions of the Patriarchs, the law of Moses, &c. were the methods of divine wisdom, for a time, to keep the hearts of men in a state of holy expectation, till the birth, the death, the resurrection and ascension of Christ should conquer death and hell, open a new dispensation of God, and baptize mankind with the Holy Ghost and fire from heaven. On the day of Pentecost this new dispensation of God came forth, which on God's part was the operation of the Holy Spirit in gifts and graces upon the whole church; and on man's part was the adoration of God in spirit and truth.'— 'The spirit of love, born of that celestial fire, with which Christ baptized his true disciples, is alone that spirit which can enter into heaven, and therefore is that spirit, which is to be born in us while we are on earth.' 'This was the spirit, or the first draught of a Christian Church—the Church at Jerusalem; a Church made truly after the pattern of heaven, where the love that reigns in heaven reigned, where divine love broke down all selfish fences, the looks of me, mine, and laid all things common to the member of the new kingdom of God on earth.'

The meaning of these quotations seems to be summ'd up by Mr. Hartley, Rector of Winwick in Northhamptonshire. 'In the dispensation of the Spirit [says that judicious divine] Christ perfects what was lacking in the external economy of our redemption under the different ministrations of the law and the prophets, and his own ministry after the flesh: [see John xvi.7.] For here types have their substance, ordinances their end, and the letter its life. Here he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver, that he may purge the sons of Levi as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Hartley's Defence of the Myst. Writers. Here the king's daughter is all glorious within, appears clothed with wrought gold; and the church is like a well proportioned body, animated by a living soul, and vigorous in both parts of its constitution, where all the members have fellowship one with another in ready service and sympathising love:—Such was once the condition of the Christian church in the early days of it;—a type of its still more perfect condition in a future state of it.'

These excellent testimonies will be properly closed by some queries proposed to the Christian world by Isaac Penington, who was a burning and shining light among the spiritual men of the last century. 'What was the glory, that was to follow the sufferings of Christ, spoken of, 1 Peter i. 11? Does not Christ give of his Spirit to his children? And does not his Spirit change from sin, from shame, into holiness, into true beauty, into the heavenly glory, and so from glory to glory?—Was not this glory brought forth in the days of the apostles? Was not great grace then upon them all: I mean such as received and held the truth in the

love of it? Did they not know victory and dominion over sin and death? Did not the babes witness pardon from sin, and know him who preserveth from sin? Had not the young men overcome the wicked one? And were not the elders strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might? No man, in these our days, can so much as conceive the glory of that state, but he who hath tasted of a measure thereof.—Was not this glory eclipsed? Did not a great darkness come over it? And have not the shadows of the night overspread the Christian state?

In the light reflected from all these testimonies to the glory of the dispensation of the Spirit, the most prejudiced readers will see, that the divines, who have distinguished themselves by their zeal for the power of godliness, how much soever they differed in other points, agree in this particular, that the peculiar glory of the Christian Church consists in the Pentecostal fulness of the Spirit, which perfects believers in one, and constitutes the kingdom of God by anointing Christians priests and kings unto God—yea heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

SECTION VII

The doctrine of the Essay is farther supported by the testimony of the Church of England, and of some of her most judicious divines.

The reader will permit me to support the private testimonies produced in the last sections, by the more respectable authority of our own Church. She is no stranger to the doctrine of the three grand dispensations, which compose Christianity; for she teaches all her children, First to believe in God the Father—Secondly in God the Son—and Thirdly in God the Holy Ghost; scripturally leading us from the knowledge of our Creator, thro' the faith of our Redeemer, to ~~the sanctifying power~~ the acknowledging of our Sanctified. If it be objected that our Church knows nothing of what is called in this Essay the dispensation of the Father, under which all mankind are placed thro' grace answer, that altho' we find in her writings some remains of the error of the papistical reprobation of all children, who are not put by Christian baptism under the dispensation of the Son, yet she nobly bears her testimony to the general dispensation of the Father's grace and mercy; acknowledging that it takes in all unbaptized children; witness the truly Christian exhortation, which she puts in the mouth of all her ministers, when they have read the gospel appointed for the office of baptism. 'Beloved, ye hear in this gospel the words of our Saviour Christ, that he commanded the children to be brought unto him, how he blamed those that would have kept them from him, how he exhorted all men to follow their innocency. Ye perceive how by his outward gesture and deed, he declared his good will toward them; for he embraced them in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them. Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that he will likewise favourably receive this present' [unbaptiz'd] 'infant, that he will embrace him with the arms of his mercy, that he will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of his everlasting kingdom. Wherefore we being thus persuaded of the good will of our heavenly Father towards this [unbaptiz'd] 'infant, declared by his Son Jesus Christ, and nothing doubting but that he favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours in bringing this infant to his holy baptism, let us faithfully and devoutly give thanks to him.' This exhortation to devout thankfulness for the good will of our heavenly Father towards all the infants born are under the gracious dispensation of the Father, and may of consequence be christened, or initiated by water-bap-

tism into the dispensation of the Son.

Should it be objected that this part of the baptismal office, contradicts our ninth article of religion, which declares, that original or birth-sin in every person born into this world deserveth God's wrath and damnation: I reply; that, supposing our Church contradicts herself, I have a right to follow her when she thinks of unbaptiz'd infants as Christ did, rather than when she supposes, with the Church of Rome, that they are all in a state of damnation. But I see no contradiction in the case. Our Church declares in Art. ix, that our original depravity deserves damnation, but does it follow she believes God actually inflicts damnation upon, or is really angry with any infant? May not the divine favor smile even upon adult sinners who for such crimes as David, Solomon and Manasseh committed, deserve punishment of hell? If you ask how I can prove this, I point at the myriads of penitents, who shall stand at Christ's right hand in the great day, and I affirm, that their actual sins deserve God's wrath and damnation. But does it follow that they are actually under a state of wrath and damnation? If I were so injudicious and uncharitable as to suppose, that such a wild conclusion is an article of our religion, would not Zealots himself cry out, and say, that it is highly unscriptural and irrational to suppose, that there is no difference between our desert of damnation, and God's damning of us. If this observation is just, it follows, that our Church may, without a shadow of contradiction, assert in her articles, that the original depravity of infants deserves God's wrath and damnation, and yet declare in her liturgy, that she is persuaded of the good will of our heavenly Father towards all the infants who are born within the limits of the British empire, and of consequence towards all that are born of women.

Having thus proved, that our Church holds the dispensation of the Father: I proceed to show, that she holds also the dispensation of the Son and that of the Holy Ghost. Concerning the former there is not the least doubt, since she calls all unbaptized infants to the blessing of Christianity, and teaches all her lisping children to say, In my baptism I was made a member of Christ's church. All that remains now, is to prove that she holds the high dispensation of the Holy Ghost, as well as the inferior dispensations of the Father and the Son: And that she does, appears from the deep hymn called Veni Creator, which she puts in the mouth of all her clergy and congregations, whom she charitably supposes to be already born again of water.

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire—
Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love; &c.

Thou art the very Comforter
In all grief and distress,
The heavenly gift of God most high,
Which no tongue can express.

The Foundation and the living spring
Of joy celestial,
The fire so bright, the love so sweet

The unction spiritual.

Thou in thy gifts are manifold,
Whereby Christ's church does stand;
In faithful hearts writing thy law
The finger of God's hand.

~~And then she prays thus for the sanctifying operation of the Spirit and the fire so bright
which the scriptures call the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire:~~

O Holy Ghost, into our souls
Send down Thy heavenly light:
Inflame our hearts with fervent love,
To serve God day and night.

When this prayer is answered, the finger of God's hand has written his law in our faithful hearts; we are perfected in the love, which is the fulfilling of the law; and serving God day and night, find that his service is perfect freedom.

Should it be said, that we must not judge of the doctrine of our Church by her hymns, but by her writings in prose: I reply, that her collects breathe the same sentiments. Take a specimen. 'O God, who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ, with great triumph, unto thy kingdom in heaven: we beseech thee, leave us not comfortless; but send to us thine Holy Ghost to comfort us, and exalt us to the same place, &c. Sund. after Ascension-day.—'God, who, as at this time' [the feast of Pentecost]' didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort, &c. Whitsunday.—'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name.' Communion. And that it is not every degree of inspiration, but a baptism,—a plentiful outpouring—a plentitude of the Spirit, which is sufficient for this great end, appears, I think, from the following Collects. 'Grant, O Lord, that in all our sufferings,—we may by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and Help our persecutors, &c. St. Stephen's day.—Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues;' for as St. Paul calls it, the bond of perfection.] Sunday before lent. From these quotations it is evident: (1.) That our Church thinks that purity of heart, perfection of love, and constant rejoicing in the holy comfort of the Spirit, are attainable in this life: and (2.) That the way to attain these blessings, which constitute the length and breadth of Christian perfection, is to pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and to ask that we may be filled with the Holy Ghost, or that God would send his Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts the most excellent gift of perfect love. And is not this the very doctrine contended for in this Essay?

Should it be objected, that our Church no where hints at the difference made in these sheets, between two sorts of children of God, namely those who have the Holy Spirit according to the ante-Pentecostal measure of it, and those who are endued with it according to its Pentecostal measure: I desire she may be suffered to speak her mind in this respect also. 'God' [says she] 'gave them of old grace to be his children, as he does us now.

But now, by the coming of our Saviour Christ, we' [who come up to the standard of spiritual Christianity] 'have received more abundantly the Spirit of God in our hearts.' Hom. on Faith. Part ii. And that our Church teaches, that this abundance of the Spirit was only given after Christ was glorified, appears from the following passage: 'He died to destroy the rule of the Devil in us, and he rose again to send down his Holy Spirit to rule in our hearts.' Hom. on the Resur. Nor does she absolutely suppose, that all baptized persons have this abundant measure of the Spirit, but only those who come up to the standard of spiritual Christianity. Hence it is, that, tho' she sometimes confounds the baptism of water with that of fire, as too many protestant Churches have done after the example of the Church of Rome, yet, at other times, she makes a proper distinction between them. Hence it is, that in the baptism of adults, after the candidates for Christianity have been baptized with water, and have received the inferior measure of the Spirit, which always attends a due administration of water-baptism; and after she has acknowledged, that they are 'regenerate,' she prays: 'Give thy Holy Spirit to these [regenerate] persons, that they may continue thy servants.' And it seems, that her office of Confirmation is chiefly intended to implore for her children the abundant measure of the Spirit, which, on the day of pentecost, confirmed the wavering faith of the disciples: For speaking of her members, who come to be confirmed, she says, "Strengthen them with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter," and "daily increase in them the many gifts of thy grace." A truly apostolic prayer which her bishops, after the example of the apostles, accompany with the laying on of hands on the believers, who apply for confirmation: A solemn gesture, which Peter, John, and Paul used, when they confirmed the believers of Samaria and Ephesus, who, tho' they had been baptized, had not yet received the abundant measure of the Spirit, which was bestowed on the disciples at the day of Pentecost. Accordingly, speaking of such strengthened Christians, she says: 'It is the office of the Holy Ghost to sanctify.—Neither does he think it sufficient inwardly to work for the new birth in man unless he also dwell and abide in him.—O what comfort is this to the heart of a true' [i.e. truly confirmed] 'Christian to think, that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in him!—He giveth patience and joyfulness of heart in temptation and affliction, and is therefore called the Comforter. He does instruct the hearts of the simple, in the knowledge of God and his word; therefore he is justly termed The Spirit of Truth. And where the Holy Ghost does instruct and teach,' [in his sudden, Pentecostal way] 'there is no delay at all in learning.' Hom. on Whitsunday. Part I.

Some people will possibly try to set aside these testimonies of our Church, by saying that our Reformers were indeed good men, but not equal in penetration and learning to some of our later prelates, such Archbishop Tillotson, &c. To become all things to all men, that by any means I may gain some to what appears to me an important truth, I shall confirm my doctrine by a few quotations from the writings of that rational divine, who, I believe, was never suspected of enthusiasm.

In his sermon on John vii. 30, This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified; he vindicates the pentecostal glory of Christianity in a manner, that would do honour to the most spiritual men of this age. 'I doubt not' [says he] 'but that the scripture means by it' [i.e. by this gift of the Holy Ghost] 'an immediate influence and operation of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men, an inward power communicated to Christians, to all the purposes of holiness and obedience, enabling them to be such manner of persons in all holy conver-

sation and godliness as the gospel requires; and, that this power dost continually dwell in all true [i.e. complete] 'Christians, if we do not grieve the Spirit of God:—And that the Scripture, by the Promise of the Spirit does mean this ordinary assistance common to all [true i.e. truly confirmed] Christians in all times, and not only the extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were peculiar to the first ages of Christianity, seems to them to be very plain because the Scripture makes the gift of the Spirit to be common to all the [imperfect] 'believers [who seek it thro' the obedience of faith] 'and this in all ages of the Church, as appears from Acts. ii.38,39' [compared with Luke xxiv.49 and Acts v.32].

'But [adds the archbishop] was not the Holy Ghost given to the prophets of Old? And were not good men in former ages under the ordinary influence of the divine grace and Spirit? The answer to this is easy, That our Saviour here speaks of that general, and plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost, which was promised to the latter days, that is to the gospel-age; the like to which, both for the universal communication of this gift, and for the extraordinary degree and measure of its participation, had never been in the world before; and of this it is, that the Evangelist speaks, when he dates the time of it, from after our Saviour's ascension into heaven.—This judicious Prelate then proceeds to give some 'reasons, why the dispensation of this gift of the Holy Ghost was particularly limited to this time.' They may be reduced to these three. (1) While Christ was in person with his Church, she could better dispense with the baptism of the Spirit. (2) It became Christ glorified to give the world some remarkable testimony of the power and dignity, to which he was advanced in heaven; and it was proper that as a king, he should give some evidence of his authority and majesty, at his solemn inauguration into his kingdom. And (3) This extraordinary and general measure of the Spirit was purchased by Christ's blood: it was his peculiar legacy to his Christian Church,—a legacy appointed in the New Testament, and therefore the death of the testator was to intervene, as well as his resurrection and ascension:—his death to give full validity to his last will and testament:—and his ascension into heaven to plead there the virtue of his vicarious sufferings, and to receive of the Father the Spirit of Promise. Whoever weighs the force of these arguments, the substance of which is taken from the Archbishop's sermon will be obliged to confess, that, indirectly, at least, he makes a distinction between ante-Pentecostal and Pentecostal Christianity; the latter of these dispensations being distinguished from the former by what he calls that general and plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost, which was promised of the latter days.'

This testimony of the Archbishop cannot be better supported than by that of Dr. John Heylyn, Prebendary of Westminster, one of the most judicious divines, whom the Church of England ever produced. In his Theological Lectures, which should be in every clergyman's library, he has published a Discourse on Whitsunday, where he thus maintains the truth I contend for: 'The occasion of the present festival is the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, whereby they were qualified for the conversion of mankind, and the Christian Church was completely settled and established: So that the Church does now keep its own festival, celebrate it as it were, its own Nativity: all the Saints days in the calendar shine but with borrow'd rays from this day's glory: For all those virtues of excellencies, which have made their names so precious in the Christian world, were at this time pour'd forth upon them. To this it is we owe the sanctity of their lives, the purity of their doctrines, & all the glorious acts of their martyrdom.'— 'All the other

Mysteries of the gospel prepare the way for this, which is the end of the incarnation, the fruit of the death of Christ in the full accomplishment of all his designs. He had indeed already formed the body of his Church while he was here on earth; conversing with and instructing his disciples: but by this last act, the descent of the Holy Ghost, he infused a love into that his mystical Body; he endowed it with a vigorous Principle of life and action, a heart that would always correspond and sympathise with Him, its Head.—"And this indeed seems peculiar to this festival season, that whereas the subjects of other Holy Days are actually past and concluded, so as to require only our devout remembrance and acknowledgement, the occasion of this still subsists and ever will subsist in the Church. The same Holy Spirit, which then descended upon the apostles, does still descend upon all the living members of Christ, according to his gracious Promise in the last words of St. Matthew's Gospel, almost the last words he spoke upon earth, Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world."—This promise is fulfilled in the mission of the Holy Ghost. Christ is now present in his Church by his Spirit, which, as it formerly descended upon the apostles, so it ever will descend upon all his true disciples unto the end of the world. The sacred Fountain still stands open, and nothing is retrenched from the bounteous efflux of divine grace, but only the outward prodigies, which attended it at the beginning of its course."—

The same excellent writer accounts in the following manner, for the necessity of the baptism of fire, which I plead for in this Essay. Those corrupt motives of covetousness, sensuality, and pride cleave intimately to our souls in the present depraved state; rendering all actions that proceed from them, unholy: And the Spirit of God does then sanctify us, when it disengages us from those corrupt motives. To wash, cleanse, baptize, and sanctify, are commonly synonymous in Scripture; hence the phrase being baptized with the Holy Ghost, which is elsewhere called being baptized with fire, to signify the universal and intimate purification of the inmost springs of action thereby. For with this when the prophet Malachi compared the Spirit to a refiner of gold and silver, destroying the dross, and separating all heterogeneous particles from those metals by force of fire, till they are reduced to a perfect purity. Thus the Spirit sanctifies the soul by abolishing all sordid inclinations, by purging away the multiplicity of carnal desires, and reducing all the powers of the mind to one simple constant pursuit, viz. that of God's glory. This renders the soul holy, i.e., pure, all of a kind, concenter'd in the end of its creation, the glory of its Maker."

NOTES

1. Namely into so great salvation as that which consists in the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Holy Ghost.
2. The Rev. Mr. John and Charles Wesley.
3. Mr. Wesley saith who should believe, but I beg leave to follow our translation, which is perfectly agreeable to the original, (οἱ πιστεύοντες) and leaves full room to distinguish imperfect believers in Christ, from those who are perfected by the full baptism of the Holy Ghost.
4. It is evident from the context, that Mr. Wesley does not mean here by "true believers," all the men who have some degree of true faith in Christ, as the disciples had before the day of pentecost; but such believers as "wait for the Promise of the Father, till they are made more than conquerors over sin by the Holy Ghost given unto them."